



**Meeting Minutes**  
**Wednesday, November 5, 2003**  
**Wisconsin Rapids City Council Chambers**  
**10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.**

**LRSC MEMBERS PRESENT**

**Wisconsin Counties Association**

Dick Leffler – Florence County  
Ed Brown - Juneau County

**Wisconsin Towns Association**

Gene Lueck – Bloomer-Chippewa  
Arlyn Helm – Springbrook-Washburn  
Norm Faber – Ithaca- Richland

**Regional Planning Commissions/  
Metropolitan Planning Organizations**

Walt Raith—ECWRPC  
Don Kush—WCWRPC  
Pat Pittenger (for Ken Yunker) - SEWRPC

**League of Wisconsin Municipalities**

Dave Waffle - Reedsburg  
Bill Beil, Jr. - Abbottsford

**Wisconsin Alliance of Cities**

Rick Jones - Racine  
Dave Botts - Beloit  
Jeff Mantes(for Jeff Polenske) – Milwaukee  
Paula Vandehey - Appleton

**WisDOT STAFF PRESENT**

Mary Forlenza  
Scott Bush  
Rod Clark  
Kathryn Andren  
Ron Nohr  
Susie Forde (by phone)  
Joe Nestler (by phone)

**Others Present**

Mike Hess, Florence County  
Todd Pierce – TDA

**LRSC Members Absent**

Chet Zurawik

**LRSC Member Excused**

Dennis Melvin – West Bend  
Jerry Mentzel - WisDOT  
Bill Handlos - Manitowoc  
Emmer Shields - Ashland County

**Opening Business (Don Kush, Mary Forlenza)**

Don called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. Mary took roll call.

**Review & Approval of September 10<sup>th</sup> minutes:** Minutes approved as submitted.

**Council Administration: (Don, Dave Waffle, Mary)**

**2004 Meeting Schedule Confirmed:** The schedule was passed out for review and final approval (see attached). Dates were based on majority consensus to: (1) retain six meetings per year (every other month) in Wisconsin Rapids; (2) shift the day of the LRSC meetings from Wednesday to Thursdays – specifically the fourth Thursday of the month; (3) begin an hour earlier, at 9:00 a.m.; and (4) break for a 45 minute lunch, with The Brig continuing to provide lunches.

Holidays/other local association conflicts were taken into consideration when setting the dates. The City of Wisconsin Rapids has confirmed availability of the City Council chambers throughout 2004. The Council chair retains the ability to cancel Council meetings due to lack of agenda items.

**Verification of Committee Assignments:** Our goal is to have representation from all local associations within the committees - currently the Infrastructure Management Committee has the largest number of volunteers of *all* of the sub-committees. Interested people who currently are not council members can sit on council sub-committees. Don added that the sub-committees would be much more diverse and well-rounded if all associations are represented on each committee.

The LRSC goal is to have all members involved in a committee and to keep everyone aware of the developments as the committees get organized. Once 2004 committee priorities are established, an e-mail update will be sent to council members and other interested parties. Don added that the committees are in need of revitalization, and he hopes that the Secretary will be able to energize that revitalization with ideas on how to best focus their attention. The Executive Committee will continue to discuss this issue as the Council mobilizes its work for the coming year.

**Education & Communication Committee:** Dave Waffle is the chair for the Education & Communication Committee, which has begun to meet independently from the Executive Committee. Dave told the group that they plan to meet every other month in Madison. Joe Nestler attended the past committee meeting discussing WISLR and the pavement rating process. Dave was hoping for some examples of the integration process for the Pavement Rating Program, and would also like to distribute the information to locals. The committee's next meeting is scheduled for December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003 in Madison (1:00 pm in Room 901).

**REAL Committee:** Emmer Shields is the chair for the REAL Committee. The committee's focus throughout 2003 has been its focus on modifying the environmental permitting process for local projects with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and WisDOT. The

committee will be in need of more volunteers to participate, particularly as it branches into other issues for 2004.

**Other Committees (Infrastructure Management, Local Transportation Finance):** It is hoped the upcoming meeting with Secretary Busalacchi will provide further direction and priorities for these two committees.

**Other Administrative Information:**

Membership: The council is short one representative from the Wisconsin Towns Association (WTA) with the departure of La Verne Grunwald, and WTA will be nominating a replacement soon.

The LRSC Biennial Report has been published and hard copies were distributed to council members. The primary distribution for the report will be via the LRSC homepage on the WisDOT Internet site. Additional updates to the LRSC homepage are planned by year's end.

Mary suggested it would be an appropriate gesture to send something to the Mayor of Wisconsin Rapids and his staff to thank them for their hospitality over the past several years. It was discussed that each member could contribute \$5-10 for a gift basket to be delivered in time for the holidays. Walt Raith also suggested a plaque of recognition, Mary thought it was a good idea and would follow up on this with the Secretary's Office. WisDOT will take the lead on getting the gift basket.

**LRSC Leadership Meetings with WisDOT (Don, Dave)**

**Summary of 9/30 meeting w/DTIM Leadership Mark Wolfram and Ken Leonard**

This was the first opportunity the LRSC leadership had to meet with Mark and Ken, and a large part of the meeting was a discussion on financial issues. Input from DTIM was also desired concerning the LRSC, committees and their general functions. The meeting provided an opportunity for Council leadership and DTIM management to get to know one another, while DTIM expressed their renewed support of the LRSC, its committees and their issues.

Dave Waffle felt that the responses to some finance questions were unclear, as were the future impacts to the Local Roads Improvement Program. However, he also expressed a positive impression of Mark Wolfram, saying that he was thought to be a "good systems thinker, and a big-picture kind of guy".

Rick Jones said that he thought the environment wasn't conducive to laying out solutions yet given the current fiscal crisis. It was restated that the quality of service is directly related to the level of funding and the question has been raised- what level is the WisDOT Secretary willing to support?

Better coordination between WisDOT and DNR on environmental permitting and local road issues was also mentioned as a need. Rod suggested that we write up a process on the involvement of distributing Federal Aid money. Paula reminded us of the 'urban-sprawl' issue; allocation is currently based on the population of a given area, not the length/amount of roadways that need maintaining. As urban areas grow and spread into rural countryside, the STP-Rural

funding doesn't increase even when the area *has* (unless there has also been a population boom).

### **Finalization of Issues for 11/18 Meeting with WisDOT Secretary:**

The meeting will provide the opportunity to obtain confirmation and additional direction from the WisDOT Secretary on issues the council is and will focus upon. Under the current climate, revenue enhancement won't be easy. The meeting should help identify areas of study for the council and should help determine what issues aren't worth focusing the Council's time/energy on? Dave W. is planning to follow-up on DNR projects and 'Single Point of Contact' idea.

Ed Brown indicated that a financing package was needed that the Council can work with committees on. WCHA will be attempting to put something together concerning the monetary issue, so that they have some information that can be taken back to local communities. He also feels that we *all* need to get involved to alleviate the financial pressures. Dick Leffler stated that he believes in maintaining what you have, and moving on. In regard to indexing the gas tax, Rod mentioned reminded the group of the admonishment by Governor Doyle, "Nobody is repealing the index on my watch". One thing is clear- the State needs other funding mechanisms and shouldn't solely rely on indexing the gas tax. The on-going concern of transportation money being diverted to non-transportation items was raised. Members were interested in knowing the amounts, use and justification for these non-transportation funding decisions.

It was noted that General Transportation Aids (GTA) aren't keeping-up with the rate of growth. Based upon current revenues, we wouldn't be able to provide inflationary growth to GTA and Highway Aids. Don stated that we have difficult financial issues to deal with.

Don suggested that the Council might want to get together early on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> for the Secretary's meeting (probably about 30 minutes) and construct a script to help give it the direction and thoroughness we want.

### **Progress on Improving the Environmental Process:**

Rod mentioned that the REAL Committee didn't meet last month, but are working with Dave Siebert from DNR to flesh out some ideas in regards to environmental streamlining. There was a meeting on October 14<sup>th</sup> with representatives from the Wisconsin County Highway Association, League of Wisconsin Municipalities, Wisconsin Towns Association and Dave Siebert with DNR. A specific proposal was requested and it was agreed to split up pieces and work on it - benefits vs. challenges. From an association perspective, Rick Stadelman of WTA vocalized his concern that the proposal not overreach – he doesn't want expectations raised and then be unable to deliver.

The REAL Committee is scheduled to meet in early December.

## **2005-2007 Local Federal Improvement Programs (Mary Forlenza)**

Mary provided an update to the group (see attached handout).

Ed Brown related what WCHA's response was to the delays; Mary assured everybody that development continues, and that approvals will happen as soon as possible.

Walt asked if amendments are going to be any easier for the projects with the automated programs? Information will still need input into FIIPS, but the format for MPO data will be streamlined and universal. There is a real need to have information standardized, but WisDOT/BTLR will also accommodate some select areas that are in need of information above and beyond what BTLR does.

Rod interjected that some people are asking how we got into this spot? The answer is because another system needed to be in place before we could even start this phase of the FIIPS implementation. Another reason for the delay is the unavailability of programming resources at the preferred early points when they were needed.

## **Trans 233 Status (Ron Nohr, WisDOT)**

Ron discussed the status of Trans 233, and addressed the group other related issues (see handouts).

Don Kush raised a question about the planning process, and the sequence of WisDOT's input in relation to the reviews- wouldn't it be more beneficial to have input from DOT before the plans have been carried out? Rod Clark explained that WisDOT's role is only to give guidance, and not to be involved in any comprehensive plans.

Dick Leffler asked Ron if he had heard correctly, that 95% of special exceptions were approved? Ron verified the percentage and Dick went on to ask why the 95% weren't written out of the process, and rewrite the rules for the leftover 5%? He also mentioned that there might be some negative perceptions concerning the lengthy process; Ron said that he hasn't received any significant amount of feedback supporting WisDOT's involvement.

## **Pavement Ratings & WISLR Update:(Joe Nestler/Susie Forde via telephone)**

Susie Forde will soon be taking Joe Nestler's former position as Chief of the Data Management Section. Joe assured everybody that WISLR will be in good hands with Susie as Section Chief.

New users of Pavement Rating and WISLR are growing, to date there are 130 locals who have complied (8%). Last year at this time we had 20% already submitted. It is not clear whether this is cause for alarm- or were they waiting for the new version of Paserware? Most submittals in 2001 arrived in December.

Paserware v3.0 is due to come out in early 2004; there has been significant progress made to the program. One reason for the delay is the desire to have this program built for the capacity to carry the department for years to come, and to build compliance with WISLR as well.

Don asked if the early 2004 introduction date was specified in the reminder mailings and Joe assured him that it was, but couldn't recall which reminder letter contained the information (final reminder letter in October). That particular letter also mentioned that locals could use a spreadsheet provided by WisDOT to complete the rating process.

WisDOT also sent out a letter containing the delay information. Feedback from locals has generally been negative; they are unhappy about the delay. Joe admitted that they are "learning from our mistakes", but that the time spent now will pay dividends later. He also reminded the group that the next cycle would be much smoother. What is the goal? To get Paserware v3.0 finished, with future capacities in place.

Walt asked if road name changes could be submitted with Paserware? There is a field for "route-discrepancy", which allows local road coordinators to make the changes from the information included in v3.0, but not directly from it. Joe also added that you could add or delete sections.

Walt Raith asked if there is going to be an Internet connection to WISLR available? Editing data in WISLR is currently time consuming and difficult, it seems like it could be improved. Joe asked about the speed of connection modem because there is a link between the speed of the modem and the processing speed of WISLR. There should be 5-10 second delay, if it's more, it might be an issue with your local connections.

### **Closing Business/Draft Agenda for January 2004 Council Meeting**

Don suggested we have an update on the pavement-rating system for next agenda. Paula Vandehey said that the Committee Reports should be ready in December; Don is still hoping to get input from the Secretary to help reenergize the committees.

Mary is scheduled to brief the Secretary on November 11<sup>th</sup> and discuss what the Council should be focusing on in terms of finance issues and any other important issues. Don suggested if there isn't a strong emphasis on revenue creation, then we need to ask the Secretary what level of service he sees WisDOT providing.

Don reminded everybody that the agenda is open, and you will all have more opportunities to share ideas for the next meeting.

Todd Pierce from the Transportation Development Association announced the 14<sup>th</sup> annual 'Fly-In'.

### **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.